Catholicism and Roman Catholicism

Three Addresses delivered in Grosvenor Chapel in Advent, 1922

BY

CHARLES GORE, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D.

1/- NET.

280.33
G61.c

WBRAY & CO. LTD.
DON AND OXFORD

Class 290.38 Book S66c
General Theological Seminary Library
Chelsea Square, New York

PRESENTED BY
Soc'y for Promoting Religion and Learning

CATHOLICISM AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Catholicism and Roman Catholicism

Three Addresses delivered in Grosvenor Chapel in Advent, 1922

BY

CHARLES GORE, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D.

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD.
LONDON : 28 Margaret Street, Oxford Circus, W.1
OXFORD : 9 High Street
MILWAUKEE, U.S.A. : The Morehouse Publishing Co.

R80.3S
G660

73283

First impression, 1923

WARNER CAT. NO.
YAARU
NEW YEN

Made and Printed in Great Britain by
A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., London and Oxford

PREFACE

I CANNOT allow the publication of the second address in this little volume without regret. It does not at all represent the feeling towards the Roman Church which either I entertain myself or would wish others to entertain *on the whole*. This is because it is concerned exclusively with the claim of the Roman Church to be the whole Church. Thus it gave me no opportunity to speak of its greatnesses and beauties and glories. I hope my Roman Catholic friends will remember this and forgive me.

If I am asked, as I have been already, how, if every part of the Church is as defective as I say, we can believe in the Church and trust it, I should wish to give the same reply as Père Gratry gave[1] in other words—it is because of what the Church is entrusted with and embodies, none the less in spite of its defects, in every period and in every portion. Any

[1] Quoted in *Roman Catholic Claims*, chap. x at the end.

candid history of almost any period or any part of the Church, at least since "the conversion of the empire," does in fact present a disappointing, sometimes a profoundly disappointing picture. But everywhere, if the Church is challenged to say why it is there, it gives the right answer. It is to hand down the ages a certain faith, to present Jesus Christ to men, and to be the visible organ and dispenser of the grace and the gifts of His Spirit. Thus it offers us the Creed, the Gospels, the Sacraments, and the Communion of Saints. Its unworthinesses and divisions and variations do not touch these things. By them we can live in what is perfect and what can never disappoint; we know that, however weak the cause of our Lord may seem to be in present experience, the kingdom of God and the manifested sovereignty of Christ is certain to come, and is at all times the thing supremely worth living for.

C. G.

Christmas, 1922.

CONTENTS

PAGE

I

CATHOLICISM - - - - 1

II

ROMAN CATHOLICISM - - - 19

III

PROTESTANTISM AND ANGLICANISM 37

CATHOLICISM AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM

I

Catholicism

"There is one body and one Spirit."—*Eph.* iv. 4.

I WISH in these addresses to distinguish Catholicism broadly from a special development of Catholicism which is rightly identified in history with the Roman Church; and I mean by Catholicism what is generally meant by the term in histories, and especially in histories of early Christianity, viz. that way of regarding Christianity which would see in it not merely or primarily a doctrine of salvation to be apprehended by individuals, but the establishment of a visible society as the one divinely constituted home of the great salvation, held together not only by the inward Spirit but also by certain manifest and external institutions. To-day

I am to explain this idea of Christianity and to justify it as undoubtedly original and due to our Lord Himself.

I

We must, however, be careful in speaking of our Lord as having founded the Church. For, in fact, the Church is older than the Incarnation, and we shall never understand its origin until we understand this. S. Stephen gave us the right clue when he spoke of Moses as having been "in the Church in the wilderness"[1]: for the birthday of the Church was at latest the redemption from Egypt and the Covenant of Sinai.

The word *ecclesia*, translated "church," was a common Greek word for an official assembly of any people, and is used in the Greek Bible to describe the "congregation" or "assembly" of Israel. But it tends to pass from the first sense of an assembly of the holy people to mean the holy people itself. So it is used by Stephen.

The divine purpose for the holy people of Israel was to find its fulfilment in the coming of the Messiah, which was to be

[1] Acts vii. 38.

the occasion of the establishment of a new and everlasting Covenant, of the general outpouring of the Spirit of God, of the resurrection of the dead, and of the recognition among all nations of the religion of Israel. These great promises are the theme of the prophets. But we find in the prophets one continuous lamentation over the faithlessness of Israel, and its failure to correspond with the divine purpose. Only a faithful remnant is, it appears, the real channel of the divine action. So it happened when the Christ appeared in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth—the Jewish nation as a whole rejected Him, and procured His crucifixion. Our Lord in the Gospels constantly recognizes that His people are, as a whole, rejecting Him, and with the same result as the old prophets anticipated: not that the holy people Israel was to cease to exist or become of no account, but that the faithful few, who are represented (as one may say) officially by the Twelve Apostles, have become the true Israel, the Church of the living God, now to be reconstituted on the basis of its new faith in Jesus as the Christ, and of the New Covenant which He was establishing in the blood

of His self-sacrifice, and in the power of the Resurrection and of the outpoured Spirit.

If you read the New Testament with open eyes afresh you will find in all its dominant thoughts—as that Jesus is the Christ, that the resurrection of Jesus is the pledge or first-fruits of the general resurrection, that the New Covenant is now established by His sacrifice, that the promised Spirit has been given, that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," that in Jesus all nations are to find in Zion their mother, that though the Church be predominantly Gentile in origin, it none the less calls Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob "our fathers," and accepts the Old Testament Scriptures as its own—in all these familiar thoughts you will find the recognition that the Church of Jesus Christ is the true Israel, the ancient people of God, the royal and priestly race of the redeemed, the twelve tribes of the dispersion. That is the clue to the New Testament. But like the ancient people after the Captivity,[1] or in an even deeper sense, it required re-founding. And our Lord is seen occupying

[1] See Acts xv. 16.

Himself with that. In the parable of the faithless husbandmen He intimates that the controllers of the Vineyard are to be changed—the authority of the scribes and pharisees and priesthood is to pass to others.[1] And those others are the Twelve. They are, in the parable of the Household, the new stewards whom the Lord has set over the house to give to His servants their portion of meat in due season.[2] They are the princes of Israel, who are to find themselves sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes.[3] Thus the great saying of our Lord to Peter[4] is vindicated—as Dr. Hort interprets it—by being in thorough accord with the somewhat dimmer but yet sufficiently distinct evidence of S. Mark and S. Luke. Our Lord, who shows elsewhere His profound sense of the need of a strong foundation for a spiritual fabric, appears in this passage as determined to find it in men, not in documents. But He sees in men generally a shifting sand on which He cannot build. Now, at last, as with a sigh of relief, He sees in Simon son of Jonah, in virtue of his confession of His Messiah-

[1] S. Mark xii. 9.
[2] S. Luke xii. 41 ff.
[3] ibid. xxii. 30.
[4] In S. Matt. xvi.

ship in trying circumstances, one who is capable of being solidified into rock-like consistency—something on which He can build. So He hails him: "Thou art Peter [Rock-man], and on this rock I will build my Church," that is, My Israel—the Israel of the now acknowledged Messiah. And this Israel shall be, as the prophets always held, indestructible. "The gates of death shall not prevail against it." And He promises at some future date to constitute Peter the steward (or a steward) of the divine household: just as, in similar terms, the prophet Isaiah[1] had received commission to appoint Eliakim steward with the key of the House of David in the place of the worthless Shebna; and He promises also to give to Peter the authority—so familiar to the Jews—to bind or loose—that is, to interpret the divine law by way of prohibition (binding) or allowance (loosing), with a heavenly sanction. This means a restricted legislative authority—restricted, I say, because it implies a divine law to be interpreted, and it is only as interpreters of this law that those entrusted with authority must legislate: though in our Lord's case He

[1] Isa. xxii. 21, 22.

laid down very few statutes and left the Church which He had refounded largely in the freedom of the Spirit to make its own necessary laws. It is similarly in accordance with the Gospels as a whole that, in the authentic appendix to S. John's Gospel, our Lord is represented as re-establishing Peter, after his denial, in his *pastoral* office—that is, in the Old Testament sense, in the office of Ruler, with the double duty of feeding and discipline.[1]

These special dealings with Peter and promises to Peter are connected with our Lord's personal dealings with him; and, though he appears as the leader of the Apostles, it does not appear—though to this subject I must return—that any office or authority is given to him which is not shared equally by all the Apostles. Thus when our Lord[2] is represented as no longer promising but giving disciplinary and judicial authority to the Apostles—the authority to "remit" and "retain" sins (as by admitting into the Church in Baptism, or restoring men to it in absolution, or, on the other hand, by refusing admission or by excommunication) — the

[1] S. John xxi. 15 ff. [2] ibid. xx. 21–23.

authority is given to all alike. "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you. . . . And he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them: whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

II

When I read the records of the first Church there does not seem to me to be any room for questioning the Catholic idea of the Church. I am profoundly aware that the Catholic Church has been no more faithful to its charge than the Church which was the people of Israel alone, and that it has been at times not the instrument but the antagonist of the Spirit. To this melancholy subject I shall return. But if for the moment you can obliterate from your mind all questions of modern origin, as between Catholic and Protestant, and simply study the New Testament with fresh eyes, I do not see how you can doubt that there is, after Pentecost, no distinction at all between membership of Christ and membership of the Church. There is, for instance, in S. Paul no idea of a "justifying faith" which does not take effect in Bap-

tism, which is baptism into Christ and also into His body, the Church. There is no idea of discipleship which does not involve membership and the obligations of membership: no justification anywhere for the notion that the thing of real importance is to believe in Jesus, and that membership of any earthly and visible society is a secondary matter. On the contrary, the whole stress of the New Testament is laid on the fact that the love of God can exist not otherwise than in the love of the brethren. In the primary obligation for one who would belong to Jesus to belong to the holy community, the sacred brotherhood, there was embodied the principle that man is essentially a social personality, and that his union with the true God could be no individual gift, but could be found only in community.

Human nature is a very disruptive thing. Human individualities are always running towards eccentricity. The very idea of a Catholic society, that is, a society in which men and women of all races and kinds, inhabiting many different places, should live as one body in actual fellowship, was, as S. Paul sees clearly enough,

a very difficult idea. But it was actually realized, in spite of acute difficulties and occasional failures, in the undivided Church of the first centuries. Emphasis came to be laid in East and West on different ideals of Churchmanship. The original idea that the Church exists primarily to bear its moral witness, and to exhibit before men's eyes the new life of sonship and brotherhood, became, alas! in many ways obscured. Nevertheless, the Church did maintain for more than half its history, not perfectly, but really and impressively, its unity. There was no doubt at all through all this long period, and, indeed, down to the sixteenth century, that membership of Christ must mean membership in the visible body, the Catholic Church. God would need, no doubt, to rectify the mistakes of the Church in dealing with individuals in His perfect justice. There might be people excommunicated from the Church who would prove to be really all the time the friends of Christ, approved by Him. Nevertheless, there had been no alteration of the Covenant. The Covenant was not with individuals but with the one visible Church.

III

For maintaining unity there were, specially, three links, the observance of which was of divine obligation:—

First, there was the holding of the common faith—the word of God—which in course of time was expressed in the Creeds, especially in what we call the Nicene Creed, and protected by certain decisions of General Councils, and for which the court of reference was the New Testament interpreting the Old. In the earliest days, before the New Testament books were written or before they were formed into a Canon, the authority lay with the Old Testament and "the tradition" which is frequently referred to in the New Testament, and which was the substance of "the Apostles' teaching." This was to hold the Church together in one common profession of truth.

Secondly, there were the Sacraments, especially Baptism, including Confirmation by the laying on of hands, and the Holy Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, and Penance, that is the system of authoritative discipline, by which unworthy members were put out of communion, under penance, and absolved and

re-admitted when they had shown their fitness. These ordinances rested on the authority of Christ Himself, expressed in His words uttered on earth, save that there is no evidence that Christ on earth instituted the rite of the laying on of hands, except the evidence that the Apostles practised it from the beginning as if there was no more doubt about its authority than about Baptism itself.[1] That Christ did Himself re-establish the Jewish rite of Baptism, with a new meaning, and did institute the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, as the Gospels record, there is not, I think, any justification for doubting.[2]

Now what is the meaning of these Sacraments? You will reply that "they are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we should receive the same spiritual grace and a pledge to assure us thereof." That is an excellent definition of a sacrament as a means of grace to the individual. But it

[1] But when we speak of what was "ordained by Christ Himself" and limit this to what He expressly appointed while on earth, I think we are doing what the Apostles would hardly have done.

[2] See on the institution of the Eucharist, *Belief in Christ* (John Murray), p. 99.

leaves out of sight one very important and essential feature of these institutions, viz. that they were social ceremonies. Baptism was admission to the community. "By one Spirit were ye all baptized *into one body*." Confirmation was the imparting to the new members of the body, by one of its chief officers, of the full endowment of the Spirit which qualified them to play their special parts as members of the body. The Holy Communion, as its common name implies, was a *sharing together* of the divine gift, "seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread."[1] Penance and absolution, again, as we witness S. Paul administering and directing it in the Corinthian Church, was the recognition that grave sin was not only a private matter between God and the soul, but also an outrage upon the Church; and that the member who had thus outraged the Church needed the judgement and absolution of the Church as the instrument of the judgement and forgiveness of God.

The third link of connection in a scattered but continuous society was the

[1] 1 Cor. x. 17.

institution of the Apostolic ministry in communion with which all members of the body must remain. This authoritative ministry is very apparent in the Acts and the Epistles in the persons of the Apostles, with the prophets and teachers and evangelists who were of their company, and (so far as it was not special to the first Apostles) it was propagated by being imparted in succession to others in different degrees by the laying on of hands. To be a member of the Church meant from the first to be in communion with its officers, and in submission to their proper authority.

IV

Now there does not seem to me to be any room for doubting that this whole conception of the Church, as the sphere of the divine covenant of salvation, pervades the New Testament, and also is really due to our Lord Himself. I do not think that anything could ever have blinded men's eyes to this except the later corruptions of the Church and the confusions arising from widespread revolt against it. To such later events I must return. Now I say—simply look with fresh eyes at the

original documents of the Church and its first history, and you must recognize that the Catholic interpretation of Christianity is the true one. The Church, you will see, is no invisible fellowship of the elect, save that part of the Church, the Head and the members who have departed this life in Christ, are in the unseen world. It is the visible, tangible body known to history: and there is no recognized membership of Christ save membership in this His earthly body.

There has pervaded the Protestant world a strange misconception of the meaning of a "spiritual" religion. It has been thought of as if a spiritual religion were something which subsisted only in the heart of the individual, and that it must be independent of "external ordinances." But such ideas are not scriptural. The most characteristic New Testament word to describe the nature of the Spirit's action and method is "communion," or "sharing together," the "fellowship of the Holy Ghost": and the chief sign of our possessing or being possessed by the Spirit is that we can live the common life, not of any self-chosen number of congenial souls, but of

those whom membership in the Church has made our brethren—*the* brotherhood. And the meaning of *spiritual* in the New Testament is not *immaterial* or *invisible*, but *that in which the Spirit rules.*

It was the Pagan Greek idea that there was something low and evil in the material world. But the Bible pronounces the material world "very good." It refuses to find the root of sin in the body. The root of sin is in the will. The vilest sins are only the misuse by rebel wills of legitimate physical powers. The Bible has no horror of sex as such. It recognizes that God has entrusted the most marvellous of spiritual powers—the production of an immortal soul—to that very sexual function which is most liable to abuse by the passionate will. But the sinfulness lies in the will. Let but the will be right with God and all the physical nature will come right also. Thus God Himself, the Son, has been made flesh in Jesus Christ.

And He is still "coming in the flesh."[1] And He is to redeem finally the whole creation, and to give to each man his spiritual body. It is in accordance with

[1] 2 S. John 7.

all this principle of the consecration of the material world that the Spirit of Christ should have *embodiment* in the Church. There is "one Body" as there is "one Spirit." The Kingdom of God, the spiritual society, is there embodied. This is the principle of the Sacraments. And if this carries with it, as it does, the consequence that at the last resort even a most unworthy man can be the channel of the greatest spiritual gifts, that is only a fresh expression of what lies deep in the whole creative method of God: for, as I have said, there is no spiritual gift so great given to man as (what is the foundation of all spiritual life) the production of a human soul, and that God entrusts and allows to sinners as to saints. In the Bible what is spiritual among men does not mean, then, what is not material or what is not visible. It means what is dominated by the Spirit. What is unspiritual means what is carnal or ruled from below by evil wills. And the believer in the Creed is quite true to the Bible when, after professing his faith in the Holy Spirit, he goes on, in the next breath, to say, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church"—which, indeed, as S. Thomas

Aquinas says, he can only do because the Holy Catholic Church is the organ and vessel of the Spirit. That is the divine idea.

II

Roman Catholicism

"Thy sister . . . was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride. . . . Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant."—*Ezek.* xvi. 56, 60, 61.

AMONG the developments of the early Catholic Church the development of the Roman Church fills the largest place in history. And the note of that development has been unmistakable. It is the note of imperialism, the note which it carries over from the Roman Empire, to which in a remarkable way it succeeded. The climax of its imperialistic claim is to be found, in one sense, in the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII in 1302: "We declare, affirm, define and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff"; in another sense in the definition of infallibility at the Vatican

Council of 1871, where it is declared that "the definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves and not by consent of the Church."

It is claimed, you see, that submission to the Pope is necessary for the salvation of every human soul, and that the Bishop of Rome, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, is, by himself, the organ and mouthpiece of infallibility. This means that the Roman Church is the whole Church and the infallible Church. Now I am not here to dispute the greatness or the glory of the Roman Church, but solely to show why we should entirely repudiate this its claim to be the whole Catholic Church and by itself the seat of infallibility.

I

In defending these dogmas the Roman Church deals very largely with certain Scripture texts, especially with our Lord's words to S. Peter, of which I was speaking last time. It has appropriated these words: "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church." Inscribed in vast letters round the dome of S. Peter's Basilica, they impress our imagination with a thrill. The Romans have done with

this text very much what Lutheran Protestantism in the sixteenth century did with the Epistle to the Galatians. That, too, still haunts the imagination, and with a Protestant ring. But we desire to be true to both the one and the other passage of Scripture. And when you really study S. Paul you find that, on the whole, he is by no means an individualist who can find no room for authority in the Church. Quite the contrary. In the same way, if you read the New Testament as a whole, you see that the idea of any official authority being given to Peter over and above what was given to all the Apostles has no support at all. Thus Peter appears in the first half of the Acts—that is till S. Paul seems to supersede him—as the leader of the apostolic band: but no more. S. Paul's references to S. Peter, or "Cephas," in his Epistles suggest nothing in the world less than any authority inherent in him, other than the common apostolic authority; and S. Paul's account of Church unity under Christ the Head seems to exclude the notion of a supreme headship on earth. The utterances of Roman pontiffs from the fifth century downwards, and earlier, have

been full to overflowing of the sense of a dignity given by God to Peter and his successors in the Roman see which none may share. But S. Peter's Epistle is as far as possible from sounding any such note. He is content to call himself "an Apostle."

II

When I move out into Church history, I note very early that different Churches have different characteristics. So it is with the Greek-speaking Churches, the Syriac Church, the African Church, the Roman Church, the Celtic Church; and, owing in part to these differences, even from early times you see that unity was maintained with difficulty. In the first days, however, incomparably the greatest debt of gratitude is due to the Greek-speaking Church. To it, in the main, we owe our theological terms and our understanding of the New Testament. Then when the African Church and the Syriac Church pass out of existence or out of sight, and the Celtic Church becomes Romanized, there remain only the great rivals, Rome and Constantinople. Their ambitions clash. Finally, there is

schism — the responsibility for which appears to be divided about equally. We ask ourselves, "In becoming separated from the Roman see in 1054, did the Eastern Church abandon anything concerning the authority of Peter as persisting in the Roman Church which had been at any period part of its creed?" The answer is a decisive No. The Catholic Christianity of the Greeks had acknowledged no such doctrine.

Listen to the greatest modern Roman Catholic historian of the early centuries, Duchesne. He is describing the period of theological conflict in the fourth century, when the Church in the East appeared to be hopelessly bewildered, confused, and divided on the central points of the Faith; and the Church of Rome, where there was comparatively little theological interest or controversy, was, on the whole, enviably quiet and steady, constantly strengthening its governing position in the West. In this hour of extreme necessity, had the Eastern Church any idea of Rome as the divinely given centre of unity and authority to which it must at all costs cling? Listen to Duchesne, who is discussing the difficulties of the em-

perors in dealing with Church divisions:[1] "When the points in controversy did not go beyond the domain of the local Church, it was possible still to settle them by the intervention of superior ecclesiastical authorities, to whom, in case of need, the Government could lend material support. But if the episcopate were divided, what means could be found of producing agreement, and which side ought to be taken? If there had been in the Church of the fourth century a central authority, recognized and active, it would have afforded a means of solution. But it was not so. Antioch and Alexandria are at variance. . . . How shall the matter be decided? By doing as [the Emperor] Aurelian did and putting himself on the side taken by the Roman Church? For that it would have been necessary that there should be in this respect a tradition, a custom; that it should have been usual to see the Roman Church intervening in such matters. But in reality it was a very long time since anything had been heard of that Church in the East. A century before the authoritative ways

[1] *The Early History of the Church*, Eng. trans. (John Murray), vol. ii, p. 521.

of Pope Stephen had offended many people, among them some of those most held in honour. The deposition of Paul of Samosata was notified to the Church of Rome, as it was to that of Alexandria; but it had not had to take any share in it. It played but a minor part at the Council of Nicaea. Athanasius, then deposed by the Council of Tyre, does not seem to have had any idea that an appeal to Rome might restore his fortunes. It was his adversaries who . . . made the first approaches to Pope Julius. Further, as soon as they were met by opposition from him, we find them assuming a disdainful attitude towards the Pope, and even taking upon themselves to depose him. . . . There was not then a guiding power, an effective expression of Christian unity. The Papacy, such as the West knew it later on, was still to be born."

But the recognition of the Papacy, as the West knew it, was never born in the Eastern Church. Easterns, when hard pressed and needing the help of Rome, did from time to time seek to conciliate the Pope by the use of phrases such as would please him. That is the Eastern way, we know. But when it came to

any synodical statement they consistently refused to recognize anything special in the Roman see, except an honorary precedency, which they ascribe to its position in the capital city of the Empire. So it was that Constantinople, when it became the capital city of the East, demanded a like precedence and was granted it, in spite of the protests of Rome, by the Fourth Œcumenical Council (28th Canon): "The fathers properly allowed the precedency to old Rome because it was the imperial city, and the 250 bishops [that is the Second Œcumenical Council at Constantinople], being moved with the same intention, assigned the equal precedency to the most holy throne of New Rome [i.e. Constantinople], judging with reason that the city which was honoured with the sovereignty and senate, and enjoyed equal precedency with the elder Imperial Rome, should also be magnified like her in ecclesiastical matters, being the second after her."

The East never acknowledged the Roman claim of a divinely granted supremacy. Down to the present day the Orthodox Church has maintained its ancient profession. The guilt of the

great schism lies divided. But there is no reason whatever for the suggestion that the East ever rejected any part of the faith or order of the Church which it had ever held. And there is no excuse for supposing that at the time of the schism it ceased to be part of the Church, any more than the Church of Rome. Historically judged, and judged by Scripture, the Roman Church is not the whole Church.

III

But it is at least as important to notice that the Roman Church presents in its moral and spiritual characteristics all the features of a one-sided development. Autocracy has, no doubt, many excellences as a form of government when it is in good hands. Roman authoritative arguments have in the past constantly assumed that absolute rule by one man is obviously the best form of government. But the world has decided against them in the secular sphere, and these naïve arguments to-day fall very flat. However, for good or evil, that is the Roman conception of Church government. In the Pastoral of Cardinal Mercier, which Lord Halifax

has recently introduced to us,[1] this aspect of the Papacy is made prominent. The Cardinal describes it as "the accepted and cherished supremacy of one conscience over all other consciences, of one will over all wills." He speaks of all the bishops "subscribing beforehand to a programme they do not even wish to know," i.e. the new Pope's, convinced "that in matters of faith and Christian morality, not only will he not err, but he cannot err." This sort of autocracy inevitably makes a virtue of passive, unquestioning acceptance. With S. Ignatius of Loyola[2] we must say, "To make sure of being right in all things we ought always to hold by the principle that the white I see I would believe to be black, if the hierarchical Church were so to rule it." The acceptance of a peremptory authority levels all articles of belief which it proclaims. All are equally credible and obligatory, whatever the conditions of evidence attaching to them. So the Roman Pontiff has decreed the Immaculate Conception of Mary as a fact and dogma equally to be

[1] *A Call to Reunion*, by Viscount Halifax (Mowbrays), pp. 27–8.

[2] Rules for Thinking within the Church, No. 13; see Rickaby's edition of the *Spiritual Exercises*, p. 223.

believed with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, though there is no semblance of historical evidence for the supposed event.

But our whole soul protests—this is not the kind of faith which I find in the New Testament. In the New Testament our faith in facts—concerning the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord and the coming of the Spirit—is always scrupulously made to rest upon the ground of adequate evidence by first-hand witnesses. There is in the Church, both of the Old and the New Covenant, something infallible—that is the word of God on which it rests. But our Lord gives the most awful warnings against reliance upon *mere* ecclesiastical authority. For that may easily "make the word of God of none effect by its tradition." God will always be by His Spirit in the Church; but there is no security offered us that the Church authorities of the New Covenant may not go wrong, like the Church authorities of the Old Covenant, by relying on bare tradition with scant regard to that word of God of which the New Testament is the record. Again and again the evidence shows that they have done so.

Again our Lord, who is the supreme example of authority, showed Himself strangely averse to the use of the merely dogmatic method. He plainly desired that every man should think for himself. He chose that the disciples should find out the truth for themselves by the leading of God within them—even about His own Messiahship. He surrounded Himself with a group of men who loved to ask questions. They constantly asked Him plain questions. But He very seldom gave a plain answer. He mostly replied by asking another. Mere submission to dogmatic authority is not the spirit He seems to encourage. The stress of His claim is always moral.

The same is true of S. Paul. His Epistles are one continuous appeal to the word of God, fulfilled in Christ, and to the reason and conscience of men. So it was with the early Greek Church. The Roman stress upon absolute ecclesiastical authority—the strong distinction between the *ecclesia docens* (the hierarchy) and the *ecclesia discens* (the ordinary clergy and laity) which has only to receive and obey —a distinction against which the Orthodox Church of the East has always protested

—strikes a new note which represents a different kind of appeal and claim from that of the New Testament.

Now the mass of men in some ages, and a good many men in all ages, are ready enough to receive dogma passively and practise the moderate requirements of ecclesiastical observance, if a sufficiently loud voice of authority guarantees them salvation on terms fairly tolerable to the flesh. But there are some men in every age, and many men in some ages, to whom this passive acceptance of authority without regard to evidence and free inquiry is treason against reason and truth; and reason, they know, conscientiously and freely enlightened, is the guidance of God. Passive acceptance is for them impossible, and yet many of them are men who, we feel, would most surely have been disciples of Jesus if they had lived in Gospel times. The claim of authority in the Roman Church is, as compared with the claim in the New Testament, a wholly different thing.

IV

Unscrupulousness of statement is an almost constant accompaniment of auto-

cratic authority. The Roman Church seems to us to have shown itself in its assertion of its claims extraordinarily unscrupulous. As I cannot here traverse the course of the history, I will give you but one quotation from one of the greatest of recent historians, himself a devout Roman Catholic, the late Lord Acton. He is speaking of the claim of infallibility for the Roman Pontiff as it was taking effect at the Vatican Council in 1871.[1] "At the last moment a tract appeared, which has been universally attributed to Döllinger, which examined the evidence relied on by the infallibilists, and briefly stated the case against them. It pointed to the inference that their theory is not merely founded on an illogical and uncritical habit, but on unremitting dishonesty in the use of texts. This was coming near to the secret of the whole controversy." This "inference" Acton himself drew and affirmed in the plainest language on other occasions.

The revolt of much of the best intelligence and morality of Europe, as well as of many of its worst elements, against the religious autocracy of Rome since the

[1] *The History of Freedom*, p. 512.

Renaissance, is a fact of wide significance. Besides what has been said above, the causes of this revolt of a great part of the better intelligence and morality of Europe has had certain assignable causes. On certain great subjects Rome has been the chief spiritual misleader of Europe. It was Rome that was chiefly responsible and on the largest scale for the erecting of the persecution of heretics, even to death, into an instrument of the Christian religion. On this subject Acton framed and reiterated an indictment of Rome in almost savage language. We may admit excuses. But in the main the indictment is true. Rome was the chief culprit in seeking to consecrate a method which, as we now all acknowledge, is utterly incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel. It has been on this subject the great misleader of Christian Europe.

It has been so again in its attitude towards the legitimate freedom of science. The attitude of the Church towards Galileo and the heliocentric astronomy, on the ground that Scripture and Church authority declare that the sun went round the world and the world was fixed, produced an alienation from the Church both

of scientific men and of whole generations of men attracted by the marvellous powers of science, which can hardly be exaggerated. For about two centuries Rome was again the great misleader. Other religious bodies have shared its guilt in later days. But the chief responsibility belongs to Rome.

To take another instance — thirty-five years ago it was possible for Newman to maintain that the Roman Church was not committed against some of the most assured results of Biblical criticism. But in 1893 Pope Leo XIII issued his Encyclical on "The Study of Sacred Scripture,"[1] which in the most peremptory manner identified the Church with the extremest doctrine of verbal inspiration, utterly discarding the distinction between matters of faith and morals and matters of fact and natural observation. Every statement of Scripture on every subject must be accepted as dictated by God and infallibly true. The Pope certainly intended to exercise thus his pastoral office of instructing all Christendom and especially the teachers of the

[1] The Encyclical of Leo XIII on "The Study of Holy Scripture" is quoted and commented upon in *Roman Catholic Claims* (recent editions), chap. xi.

Church. I suppose it is held not to be an infallible utterance. I notice that Roman Catholic writers appear to be again asserting a certain liberty. I dare say in fifty years they will speak about matters of criticism as they do about astronomy, freely. But meanwhile on this vital matter the authority of the Roman Church did its utmost to mislead the conscience of Europe and set the scientific intellect against Christianity.

I give only one more instance. Mediaeval theology allowed itself, by the misuse of dogmatic authority, to obscure the real meaning of our Lord's humanity. The truth came to us in such a book as *Ecce Homo*, and from countless other teachers, with a fresh thrill of delight. The Gospels and the New Testament have come to live again. One of the most vital districts of Christian truth has been restored to us. But it has been restored to us wholly, or almost wholly, by writers alien to the Roman Church, and often alien to the Christian Creed.

You see my point. I have not been talking about the Roman Church at large. Had I been doing so I should have spoken of its glories and greatnesses much more

than of its weaknesses and crimes. But I have been speaking only to one point —its claim to be the whole Catholic Church. I have shown that such a claim for the Roman sovereignty rests on no real scriptural foundation and is contrary to history ; and that the Roman Church presents, at point after point, the surest evidences that it is a one-sided development of original Catholicity in the direction of autocracy, with all the customary vices of autocracy, as well as its strength. If the Christianity of the New Testament is the standard to which we must always recur, then the autocracy of Rome requires very strenuous correction and limitation in the interests of truth and spiritual liberty. Rome is not the only guide, nor of itself by any means a safe guide.

Next Sunday I will proceed to speak of the Protestant revolt and of the Anglican Church, and of the duty of Anglicans.

III

Protestantism and Anglicanism

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."—*Ps.* cxxii. 6.

IN the first of these addresses I sought to present to you the idea of Catholicism—the idea, that is, of the religion of Jesus Christ as not merely a doctrine to be apprehended by the individual, but membership in a visible society held together in unity by an accepted faith or word of God, by sacraments of fellowship, and by an authoritative ministry; and I endeavoured to show you that Catholicism is the original Christianity of the New Testament. From the first the New Covenant was a Covenant with the visible Church, the successor of ancient Israel.

In the second address I asked your attention to different types of Christianity appearing within the Catholic fellowship —the most conspicuous being the Greek and the Roman. I showed that the Greek Church—which in later days, having its

centre in Constantinople, came to be known as the Orthodox Church—in spite of the schism between East and West, remained undoubtedly as much a true part of the Church Catholic as the Western or Roman Church. It has shown, no doubt, like every part of the Church, disfiguring blemishes and impaired vitality. But lately it has endured almost unparalleled sufferings, and vast multitudes of its sons and daughters have been true martyrs—that is, have yielded their lives, when they might have saved them and retained their liberty by denying their faith and turning to Islam. Such fidelity to its faith, even to death, is part of the traditional glory of the persecuted Eastern Churches. And if "the blood of martyrs is a seed," we of Western Christendom, whose ignominy it is to have allowed these widespread massacres to take place, must at least pray with all our hearts that these long-suffering Churches may in a more peaceful future, both in the Near East and in Russia, feel the spring of a new life arising within them, and that in a renewed intimacy of intercourse we may feel it too. To-day there is much to encourage this hope.

I

But since the Great Schism, all through the later Middle Ages and the period of the Reformation, and, for the most part, since the Reformation, the West has had little or no intercourse with the Orthodox Church, and has known little about it. Thus, when we are approaching the consideration of the Reformation, we must leave the East out of sight. There was nothing confronting the European world except the imposing structure of the Roman Church.

The period of the greatest glory of the Latin Church was the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. That was a grand flowering time of saintliness, intellect, and art. But by the fifteenth century it was exhibiting terrible signs of corruption. Its best friends knew its need of drastic reformation "in the head and in the members." The tragedy is that all the efforts of the reformers from within proved futile until the outbreak of revolution had rent the unity of Western Christendom, as it seemed incurably. So only could the Church of the Roman obedience be roused to reform itself. For

what we call the Reformation was truly on the Continent a revolution. A great part of what was most intelligent and progressive in Europe left the ancient Catholic Church and set up new organizations based, as they believed, on the pure word of God, so to speak, rediscovered.

That they had abundant excuses none can deny. But I think also none can deny that, in establishing what they thought were pure Churches on a quite new basis, they were violating fundamental principles of Catholicism as it had been from the beginning. Elsewhere I have tried to justify this statement,[1] here I can only affirm it. As it seems to me, the most effective and impressive answer of Protestantism to this indictment is that God has so manifestly blessed the Protestant Churches, who deserted the ancient Catholic structure, and the Holy Spirit has so manifestly shown His action through them, that they are proved by their fruits to be at least as true parts of the Church as any ever planted. The force of this argument from fruits we must fully acknowledge ; but it is double-

[1] See *Orders and Unity*, pp. 174 ff.

edged. We must, I say, acknowledge its force. If we think of the wealth of sanctified characters in Protestant communities, and of all that we owe them in Christian literature and the interpretation of the Bible, and of the place they have taken in the evangelization of the world, we must feel it to be a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to deny His presence and activity, not only with individuals but with the Christian organizations to which they have belonged. I wish to say this without restriction. The exhibition of the religion of the New Testament in the world would have been immensely poorer without the special excellences of Christian communities which have deserted the Catholic fabric. And there is no recognizable limit.

Thus I feel bound to acknowledge that all baptized persons are, as individuals, members of the Church Catholic. I cannot see how any one who accepts the Western doctrine of the validity of all baptisms by whomsoever given can deny this in some sense. To be really baptized into Christ is to be baptized into the Church inevitably. But this is not enough. I must acknowledge the same

reality of the fruits of the Spirit in the Society of Friends, which ignores baptism.

Now, granted that the Catholic principles are true, still it has been recognized by the more thoughtful theologians that "God is not tied to His own ordinances." That He should have poured out His Spirit and His gifts so widely beyond all covenanted or ordinary channels seems to me in no way surprising if we think what aspect the Catholic Church presented in many parts of Europe just before the Reformation, or still, alas! presents in some districts where it has had least to resist it, or what sort of aspect our own Church, which claims Catholicity, presented, say in the eighteenth century. When we reflect upon these things, can we wonder that there have arisen movements and organizations of people who saw in the Church, as it was among them, not the Bride of Christ, but Babylon or an alien stepmother, and did not consider that in separating from her they were sinning against the will of their Master?

Nevertheless, if we attempt an impartial survey we must acknowledge that this argument, from the fruits of Protestantism,

is double-edged. It is not only that Protestantism in its continental homes, where it had its origin, has been a profound disappointment. Who would not admit this about the Lutheranism of Germany or the Zwinglianism of Switzerland, or the great organization of Calvin? Since it lost the support of the belief in the infallible Book, the movement of continental Protestantism has shown an extraordinary degree of instability and weakness.

But, what is more important, it has become evident on the largest scale that Protestantism means continuous disruption. The principles which justified the first secessions continue to justify new ones. Each fresh vision of the truth, real or imaginary, but at least one-sided, justifies a fresh organization. In this way English and American Protestantism presents a deplorable picture. So do the young Churches of China and Japan, of India and Africa; for there, too, we have propagated our differences.

For a long time—through the age when free competition was the accepted watchword of successful effort—the eyes of the Protestant world were blinded to the evils of schism. But a great change has come

over us. Very widely, among Protestants, there has dawned the perception that, if anything is certain, it is certain that visible unity in the Church of His disciples was the will of Christ. If so, to a horrifying extent, we have departed from His will: and the question of questions among serious believers has become: How are we to return to it? It must be acknowledged that there was something quite as wrong with the principles of Protestantism as with the principles of the Roman Church. Our eyes turn longingly back to the New Testament and to the Christianity of the early centuries. Some sort of Catholicism is the will of Christ. What is it?

Here it is that there seems to have been a special providence in the form which the Reformation and the repudiation of the Roman authority took in England. Here the appeal to Scripture, positively and against the claim of the Roman Church to supremacy—the appeal to Scripture which was the heart of the Reformation movement—was joined with a conservative retention of the three great elements of Catholic unity—the Catholic Creeds, the Sacramental system, and the Apostolic Succession of the ministry.

II

Now I cannot speak as one who can be enthusiastic about the Anglican Church as it has shown itself in history. I confess that its history fills me with profound humiliation. I know that one of the best and greatest men of the last generation spoke of it once as in spite of all its faults "the most glorious Church in Christendom." I could not say anything of that kind. I find its continuous Erastianism, its complacent nationalism, its frequent deafness to the most urgent and obvious moral calls, its long-continued identification of itself with the interests and tastes of the "upper classes"—these and other continuous traits of the Church of England I find, I must confess, depressing and humiliating. I cannot think of it as ever rising to fulfil its vocation without drastic reforms and a very fundamental change of spirit. In particular, having so faithlessly merged its spiritual authority in that of the State, and abandoned its liberty of action into the hands of the State, it now finds itself, when the State has become impartial or indifferent in matters of religion, a scene of undiscipline which would be discredit-

able to any society, and is so much more to a Christian Church.

But I think that the very fact that a person is keenly alive to the defects of the Anglican Church, as it has been and is, only strengthens his witness to the sufficiency and glory of its substantial principles. It stands in the providence of God for a scriptural Catholicism, for, as I have said, it has maintained the essential Catholic elements of the Creeds, the Sacraments, and the Apostolic Succession.

We are very thankful that recently the authorities of the Patriarchal See of Constantinople have formally, after careful and protracted examination, accepted the validity of Anglican Ordinations: just as we were thankful when Döllinger, that great authority in the history of the Church, who had in earlier years spoken very sharp words of criticism concerning the Church of England, expressed his final judgement about our Orders: "The result of my investigation is that I have no manner of doubt as to the validity of the episcopal succession in the English Church." But we do not depend on these external testimonies. We have searched

into our title-deeds for ourselves, and feel sure that, judged by the standards of the undivided Church, we do not fall short in any essential. And to these doctrinal and sacramental qualifications we added at the Reformation, with reiterated emphasis, the appeal to Scripture both as the final testing-ground of dogmatic claims and as the school of personal piety for every member of the Church. This appeal was the constant principle and practice of the ancient Church ; and it is a matter of the greatest importance. It means that the Church has not any power to proclaim any Article of the Faith, nor the priest any right to lay it upon the conscience of the faithful, unless it can be made plain that it can be verified in the New Testament. The dogmatic authority of the Church is not anything more than the authority to proclaim, explicate, and defend the original word of God given through the prophets, consummated in Christ, and affirmed and implied in the New Testament.

This is the safeguard of doctrinal liberty. Moreover, the constant public readings of Scripture, and the familiarity of all the members of the Church with the sacred

books of Scripture, and the obligation upon the teachers of the Church to preach out of Scripture, are the greatest safeguards that can be devised that the spirit of the Church shall not permanently diverge from the original pattern. Whatever may be truly said against the Church of England, at any rate it finds its real glory in its great tradition of the knowledge of the Bible, and in the scripturalness of its preaching and teaching. May it ever retain this distinction!

This is the vocation which Providence, working in the events of history, seems to have assigned to the Anglican Church—to bear witness to a scriptural Catholicism, a Catholicism in which Scripture is enthroned in the highest place of controlling authority in the Church and in the most familiar places in every home and in every heart.

Of course, we do not deceive ourselves. We know that even a perfect expression of the mind of Christ would not, any more than when Christ was on earth, win the allegiance of all men. And the positively anti-Christian forces are very strong today. Nevertheless, this sort of Catholicism which, because it breathes the

spirit of the New Testament, must be always predominantly ethical—a religion of character—and which rests, like the New Testament, on a word of God, but proclaims for dogmas only certain truths, central and few, and which welcomes free inquiry on the part of all—this sort of Catholicism, scriptural and liberal, appeals to what is best in so many of the best men that its witness is sorely needed all the world over.

Once more we must not deceive ourselves. The recovery of unity—a reunited Church—will need truly profound, almost miraculous, changes in the spirits of men in all parts of our divided Christendom. But the new sense—deep and wide as it is—of the necessity of a united Church, if we are to be true in any measure to the purpose of Christ, gives us a great opportunity and a great responsibility: and here, too, the special witness of the Anglican Church is needed all the world over. It is the sense of this which has made the appeal of the Lambeth Conference a document which has moved the hearts of men over a very wide area of Christendom (may I not say?) more than any document of recent days.

III

My point, as you will see, in this address is this: within the area of the Churches which have maintained the Catholic tradition of the undivided Church there are different types, with some markedly different features. Of these I have spoken of two as the chief in historical bulk, the Greek or Orthodox and the Roman. They, I have endeavoured to show, must both be regarded, in spite of their variations and in spite of their having lost intercommunion, as communions within the area of the one visible Catholic Church. And, without considering whether there are other Christian communions, as, for instance, the Swedish National Church, which belong to the same group, I have made the same contention for the Anglican Communion, which, of course, has its special interest for us. But not for us only. In the providence of God it has a special witness to bear in the whole Catholic fellowship. The whole Church of Christ would be a poorer thing without its distinctive gifts.

Now public spirit, or what in nations we call patriotism, is a duty of every

individual member of any society. In the Christian religion salvation is a corporate as well as an individual thing. What we have to think of under the heading of the "salvation of our souls" is not merely our private spiritual interest. We have to think of the duty and privilege of co-operating with God in His purposes for the world. And if a special purpose of God appears clearly enough for the Anglican Church, and if at the same time it does not appear to have broken itself off by any decisive act from the Catholic fellowship, our special duty as Anglicans is to co-operate with God, as members of the Anglican Church, in spite of its weaknesses and sins.

The same duty of course lies upon the individual members of every communion of Christians, so long as it is believed to be a true portion of the Catholic Church of Christ, and the purpose of God is seen to be working in it. The whole heritage of the Catholic Church can only be maintained by the maintenance of a rich variety of special vocations corporate as well as individual. Each portion of the whole ought to recognize the others—that is, there ought to be,

what at present there is not, intercommunion. But each group within the whole has a special vocation and a special duty of loyalty.

It sometimes happens that a man's personal temperament inclines him towards the group to which he does not belong; and where intercommunion does not exist, that inclination, where it is yielded to, must mean leaving his own part of the Church and joining another. Thus there are amongst us individuals for whom the majestic order and unity of practice of the Roman Church, by contrast to our own disorders, exercise an almost irresistible fascination.

Now I cannot deny that at the last resort every man is bound to follow his conscience, even when his conscience is perverted or mistaken. Thus we cannot believe that even those who have left the Christian Faith altogether, under what seems to them the irresistible pressure of conscience, are to be condemned. Their ultimate fidelity to conscience, even a mistaken conscience, must, we feel, be the way by which they will reach the true light at last. But for an Anglican to secede to the Roman obedience is to do

the act which, as much as anything which he could do, bears public witness against our communion. Foreign Protestants at the Reformation found the impulse irresistible to desert the Catholic Church, on account of its corruptions. But those persons whom I am thinking of would say, glibly enough, that they ought to have resisted their impulse and remained to assist in organizing reformation from within. So I would say to them: Are you quite sure that what God really asks is not that very discipline of patience which the special circumstances of the Church of England renders so unpalatable to you? Our Lord contemplates for His disciples in "the last days" an extreme strain on their patience. "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." He even contemplates the failure of the public witness of the faith altogether. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Have you really shown yourself equal to the extreme strain of "enduring unto the end"? Is there any certainly promised help of God which you have not at your disposal where you are? Are you qualified, by an act of your own private judge-

ment, to prefer the Roman argument to the argument against the exclusive claims of Rome, which has seemed to some of the best and wisest men so conclusive? If you contemplate the final judgement of Christ on your acts, and if you seek to saturate yourself in the Gospels that you may know His mind, can you really allege that there is anything there more decisive than His warnings against trusting mere ecclesiastical authority, divorced from "the word of God"? Or can you fail to see that the whole force of His demand on you is concentrated on the duty of active co-operation in the positive work of His redemptive love? "Inasmuch as ye did it not . . . depart"! Can you find anything there which makes you feel certain that the denial of your Romeward inclination is likely to displease Him?

Meanwhile, while we must be true to our distinctive responsibilities in the place where God has put us, we must, by all means, constantly remember that the divisions within the Church, though they are sadly deep, do not go near the root. In the unseen world where Christ is and the blessed dead, and in the Holy Spirit who works in every heart and every

sacramental ordinance, the Church is still one. Let us live in the sense of that deep and high unity, subsisting at the heart of our wearisome divisions; and let us ask that the prayers of all the saints, reunited now even though they were separated on earth, may be with us to encourage us to faithfulness; to faithfulness alike in our struggle to become better Christians, in our struggle to reform our own part of the Church on the original Catholic pattern, and in our struggle to knit together again the sadly divided communions of the one Church of Christ.

GEN. THEO. SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

Printed by A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd.
London and Oxford

2 B1.35
G66c
73283

CO-AYL-547